

**Constructions of Subjectivities:  
Emergent Bilingual Students within Dual Language Bilingual Education in U.S. Contexts**

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### **Abstract**

This four-year ethnographic study (Bloomert & Jie, 2010; Canagarajah, 2006; Creese, 2008; Garcia & Menken, 2010; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2013) explored the symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991) of language education policies and practices through discourse analyses (Bloom et al, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Gee 2011; Johnson, 2011) within dual language educational contexts in the United States. The essential findings from this study are that: (1) in spite of the ostensible support for dual language instruction from state and district policies, deficit perspectives persisted in relation to emergent bilinguals and the educational programs that served this student population; and (2) the building administrator fostered an affirmative bilingual and bicultural learning community for the teachers, the students, and their families at Hope Creek Elementary where kindness and linguistic as well as cultural diversity were valued through an additive perspective.

As we think about the ways in which we confront and challenge the struggle for public education we must work to bridge communities together, we must acknowledge the deficit framing of our language education policies, and we must work to understand the profound ways in which the nature of deficit frames are played out in the context of the social and cultural construction of identity for linguistically and culturally diverse students. Evidence from this study challenges us to reframe and normalize bilingual ways of knowing in dual language contexts from a social justice and educational equity position. To bring about justice and human dignity we cannot continue to keep bilingual students, teachers, and families framed through deficit lenses.

**Key Words:** Language education policy, ethnography, dual language bilingual education

## **Introduction**

Historically, language education policy research has centered upon top-down policy decisions and implementations, which shaped language use in societies. Language policy studies were primarily focused on written policy statements using a structuralist approach (Menken & Garcia, 2010). There has been a shift in focus from these top-down structuralist methods analyzing language education policies as composed of entities separate from sociocultural and sociopolitical influences, toward more grounded studies seeking to capture the dynamic relationships embedded within language and power. The implementation and appropriation of language education policies as they are enacted in classrooms can be more thoroughly understood when we unpack the agentive role children, adolescents, and youth play in shaping the social, educational, political and cultural embodiments of said policies in everyday life.

Schools are spaces where students are socialized to embrace the sociocultural, sociopolitical, and sociolinguistic ideologies of those in power (Alim, 2010) authorizing and normalizing particular ways of knowing and being in the world while marginalizing and restricting others. How we come to understand the intercultural interactions in and across educational contexts as they transform and inform both educational and cultural processes can best be understood through ethnographic encounters with localized participants. In particular with bilingual children, adolescents and youth in bilingual education contexts as these contexts are often rich spaces of nuanced language education policy appropriations that the power to resist dominant hegemonic framing of linguistic hierarchies (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Freeman, 1998).

### **Subjectivities within Language and Power**

Stemming from sociology, notions of subjectivities allows us to unpack the layered complexities of social structures and social actors within those structures as they work to shape

the assiduous social realities of everyday experiences. For example, the ways in which we situate race, language, conceptions of manners, deep or non-superficial cultural ideals and attitudes, as well as understandings of normativity. Subjectivities encompass expectations rooted within an individual or group that are then projected into the sociocultural spaces of one's circle of influence shaping the ways one perceives notions of conformities as well as perceived nonconformities.

Subjectivities within bilingual education contexts acknowledge the ways in which language ideologies influence our judgments and evaluations of *appropriate* variety choice and use (McGroarty, 2010) as “language ideologies frame and influence most aspects of language use” and shape our orientations toward afforded authority to particular language varieties (p. 3). Language variety use and authority are regulated within *fields of power* and those fields of power (re)produce and maintain linguistic hierarchies created by those who hold or maintain social, economic and linguistic power (Kress, 2001) within often hidden codes of communication. These codes of communicative understandings are formed dialogically (Bakhtin, 1935) across human interactions as power is positioned and maintained through purposeful actions (Tollefson, 1991).

These purposeful actions are situated within what Janks (2010) articulates as *Politics* and *politics*; with *Politics*, being the macro level influences of government, religion, ethnic divisions, environmental issues and science; and *politics*, being the micro level of everyday life occurrences. Both of these types of politics are examined when understanding critical theory's role in language education planning and policy. Language education policies and planning are so complex, so layered, that the ideologies buried within *Politics* and *politics* become the everyday discourses of normalcy, the unquestioned common beliefs attached to not only language use but

to the people associated with each variety (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). In an attempt to uncover social ideologies influencing both our *Politics* and our *politics* we have to acknowledge “the relationships between language and power; language identity and difference; language and the differential access to social goods” (Janks, 2010, p. 40). These relationships are tightly entangled within language education policies, which are often used to subjugate linguistically and culturally diverse peoples around the world as well as used to perpetuate current sociopolitical systems that structure unequal social and economic capitals and access to political institutions of power sustaining hegemonic inequalities (Bourdieu, 1991; Tollefson, 1991). The inequalities situated within the *Politics* and *politics* proliferate educational contexts subjugating linguistically and culturally diverse students and families and in order to deconstruct these inequalities we have to understand how individual actors exercise their agentive power to create possibilities for transformative change.

### **Ethnography of Language Education Policy**

To address the layers of policy appropriation and the agentive power of individual actors, ethnographies of language education policy and planning explore the study of language education policy as sociocultural phenomena (McCarthy, 2010). Ethnographic research can be used as a methodological tool, theoretically situated in sociopolitical and sociocultural notions of power used for dissecting the many layers of language education policy. The data in this study was generated through an intimate and prolonged ethnographic encounter within Pine Grove Public Schools and at Hope Creek Elementary School. Ethnography was a methodological choice for data collection in this study in order to more clearly understand the naturally occurring encounters in classroom phenomena as children became involved in the social and cultural dynamics of everyday interactions (Spradley, 1980) within a third-grade, Spanish-English, dual

language classroom. Ethnography is a tool to study, think about, and write about insider understandings in the production of knowledge and social reality through the lens of the ethnographer's experiences in said space(s) (Van Maanen, 2011). Ethnographies of language education policies offer thick descriptions of policy interpretation and implementation at the local level in order to understand intercultural interactions in schools and in other spaces of socialization (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007).

Macro ethnographic work purposes to understand the larger historical-structural contexts influencing the more micro educational experiences (Tollefson, 1996) in order to address the layers of educational practices impacting linguistically and culturally diverse students and families. In order to understand the macro-micro relationships as they shape opportunities in local contexts we also have to understand the micro contexts (Castanheira, 2001). The micro contexts are impacted by the macro structures, and one cannot be fully understood without also understanding the other. The micro spaces of districts, communities, schools, and classrooms are impossible to fully understand without also understanding the larger impacting political landscape. Cooper (1989) emphasized the importance of analyzing language use at the micro-level and then expanding to the macro level even though much of what is documented at the micro level is unplanned (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997; Shohamy, 2010). Language use is being negotiated between participants and enacted in ways that reflect macro influences.

Ethnographic research provides space for attention to how actors exercise agency as policy arbiters (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) to make space for voicing resistance to oppressive policies through collective resistance and (re)construction of language education policies (Berryman et al., 2010; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Menken & Garcia, 2010). In the construction of subjectivity among children, adolescents, and youth, ethnography of language

education policies affords a unique qualitative lens of the dynamic layers impacting policy enactments in order to paint a clearer picture of the role non-traditional arbiters play in creating, fostering, resisting or maintaining language and power in the classroom.

### **Methodology and Methods**

In order to more deeply understand the processes of teaching and learning in dual language contexts, it is essential to make visible the often-invisible constructs of language choice and use. Language choice and use are demonstrative aspects of social alliance (Street & Leung, 2010) revealing how individuals, as well as cultural groups, are positioned in society (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005) at the intersection of macro education policies and micro enactments. In this study, analyzing micro enactments of macro language education policies aimed to unpack the layered language events in a third-grade, Spanish-English class where data were generated across daily classroom interactions. Data were subjected to interpretation with the intentional consideration of the positionings the participants and the researcher brought to the study.

This four-year ethnographic study (Bloomert & Jie, 2010; Canagarajah, 2006; Creese, 2008; Garcia & Menken, 2010; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2013) explored the symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991) of language education policies and practices through discourse analyses (Bloom et al, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Gee 2011; Johnson, 2011) within dual language educational contexts in the United States. ). Discourse in this study explores how people say, do and exist in bilingual contexts (Gee, 2011) through both written and verbal texts. Finding themes across discursive elements while critiquing the multiple layers of agentive power, as well as subjectivity, all contribute to creating rich and meaningful understandings of bilingual classroom contexts (Fairclough, 1995; Luke, 1996). Foucault (1982, 2010) would argue the differences

between agency and subjectivity are that subjectivity reflects the power relations, which shape the subject and agency refers to the strategies subjects use to transform the power relations and thus transform oneself as subject. When thinking about discourse, one cannot assume intent, cause or effect, reality or truth, one can only notice associations, notice how people say particular things in particular ways, which reflect particular identity performances (Gee, 2011). In this study, discourse analysis is used to explore the ways in which participants are subjectively situated and the ways in which participants used their agentic power to change the narrative of their subjectivity as a means to create alternative bilingual realities within in the dual language classroom.

### **Timeline**

Year one was spent understanding language education policy creation and interpretation at the state and district levels. Year two investigated the role of district administration and personnel in establishing building language policy norms. In years three and four, a deeper understanding of how the language education policies from the state and district were appropriated within the building and classroom contexts.

### **Data**

The purpose of using participant observation throughout this study was to be able to gain insider perspective through access to a multitude of vantage points impacting dual language education (Adler & Adler, 1998). This could only be achieved over prolonged periods of time in order to cultivate authentic relationships and trust which allowed me to participate in meaningful ways. Additional data collected throughout this study included: (1) still photographs; (2) formal interviews with administrators, teachers, and students; (3) survey with dual language staff at Hope Creek; (4) classroom, building, district, state and federal documents including student

artifacts and literacy assessment data; (5) video and audio data of instruction during the literacy block over an eight-week unit of study conducted four days a week for the duration of ninety to one hundred, twenty minutes per lesson; (6) student work samples; (7) end of unit assessment data; and (8) both classroom and district assessment data. Data was collected through observations of district coaching and administrative meetings, participation in state committees, observation of staff training, PLC (professional learning communities) meetings, daily classroom interactions and lessons, as well as community and school events and El Centro Comunitario activities.

Given the ethnographic nature of the study, the data collected were analyzed by initial and then secondary descriptive codes through which the themes in this paper emerged (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Coding and member checking were vital links between the data I collected and the derivation of meaning concluded (Charmaz, 2001). The codes were intended to be essence-capturing or summative of portions of data whereas a theme offered an outcome of the coding and analytic processes (Saldaña, 2013). The data collected in this study were collected over a prolonged period of time and their specific purposes or goals for constructing understanding evolved as the study progressed. The data were organized and coded by themes and relevant data were transcribed and analyzed using holistic and descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2013). Classroom participants included: one bilingual Spanish-English building administrator, one bilingual Spanish-English veteran teacher; 23 students ages 8 and 9. There were 10 Latin@s, 2 African Americans, and 11 European-Americans.

### **Findings**

I begin this analysis of language education policies by exploring the macro language education policy context in the State of Washington. Following an analysis of state policy data, I

examine the interdiscursivity and intertextuality of the Washington state language education policies and the district context of Pine Grove Public Schools. Then I explore how the district policies and positionalities around language education were recontextualized within the instructional context at Hope Creek Elementary School, which ultimately impacted the classroom contexts in this study.

### **State and District Positioning**

The intertextuality of macro and micro language education policies in the Pacific Northwest of the United States present a sequence of inconsistencies that impact students' linguistic identity formations. Macro policies influencing instructional contexts are created within a larger context of attitudes and ideologies (Ruiz, 1984) begetting the need for a deep understanding of this intersection to provide a broader picture of how instructional contexts are shaped and how they position affordances or constraints for administrators, teachers, students and families (Hornberger, 1996) in educational settings. The national language education at the time of this study fell under the federal education policy of No Child Left Behind, NCLB. This national policy is fraught with deficit language such a "limited English speaking" which has been interdiscursively woven into state and district language when talking about and referring to linguistically diverse students, which is evidenced as well as explained below.

In Washington State, the language education policy most directly impacting dual language classroom contexts at the time of this study stemmed from the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), which served as Washington State's regulatory or primary source of law over the State Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (STBIP). The WAC is best understood as a series of contradictions, which are explained through the following examples. The WAC 392-160-005 notes that districts should "use two languages [to] build upon and

expand [students'] language skills [in order for them] to achieve English competence.” The use of two languages was recommended as a scaffolding tool positioning students' language skills as a valuable asset to their learning. The language in the WAC also acknowledged bilingual instruction as the most effective programming model. However, WAC 392-160-005, the same WAC, later described linguistically diverse students' language skills as, “sufficiently deficient or absent to impair learning” and called for the need to “rectify the language deficiency [of] these students.” The deficit language in WAC 392-160-005 mirrored the deficit language of NCLB, which positioned emergent bilingual students linguistic diversity as limited and deficient in some way. In a conversation with district administration, emergent bilinguals were referred to as “vulnerable” and “struggling” which continued then to reify linguistically diverse students through a deficit lens. This framing contributes to the social construction of identities in both the teacher and students' lives

Washington State's language education policy leaves autonomous spaces for districts to adopt additive or subtractive language education practices. The contradictions found in WAC 392-160-005 leave ambiguity for administrative interpretation. Positioning students' linguistic diversity as something to be overcome followed the same policy that acknowledged the value of using two languages in order to maximize effective instruction for linguistically diverse students. The WAC 392-160-005 situates a soft stance regarding bilingualism and imposes particular subjectivities for linguistically and culturally diverse students according to the ideological positioning of the district and building administration as to whether students' linguistic resources are assets or serve to ‘impair learning’.

### **The Power of One**

In addition to the state and district language education policies impacting the subjectivity of linguistically diverse students, the exercised agentive power of the building administrator at Hope Creek Elementary also impacted student subjectivities in a way that resisted and pushed against more dominant deficit discourses. The building administrator, Lora, a middle-aged Mexican-American woman, had been the administrator at Hope Creek Elementary School for five years at the time of this study. Lora articulated how her past influenced her agentive role as the teacher leader in her building and shaped the ways in which she thought about teaching and learning. Lora, acutely aware of racial, class, and linguistic biases, recognized a need for change when she first arrived as the principal at Hope Creek. She recalled:

When I first came [to Hope Creek] a lot of our [Spanish speaking] parents would sit outside and wait for their kids. And I'm like, 'it is starting to sprinkle, come on inside' this was in Spanish, of course. They were like, 'oh, no we can't come into the school.' [and I would ask], 'Why?' [and they would reply], 'we are just told we have to wait outside,' [but] I'm like, 'no, come in' ... I [had] them sit right in front of the person who probably told them not to come in... Everyday I went and got them... [Now] our immersion program [is] where any parent, [can] speak either English or Spanish, [and] can participate and volunteer in the school. And that's good. (Personal communication, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Parents and children were subjugated to racial and linguistic micro and macro aggression that depreciated the rich experiences and resources found within this diverse community (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). The educational policies implemented prior to Lora's arrival modulated larger social inequities marginalizing linguistically and culturally diverse learners

pushing them to rebuff their own linguistic and cultural histories (Gonzalez & Montaña, 2008). Lora had a mission for equity from the first moments she arrived at the school. She furiously stood in the gap to protect families and students from the systems that excluded them from an equitable educational opportunity. Lora saw a lack of equity across student enrollment in the bilingual program and observed a poignant absence of bilingual family participation within the school community.

Lora attended to and took steps towards cultivating more equitable spaces for students and families. One of the language education policies of the school prior to Lora's arrival was an English only policy enforced by the front office staff. Lora took issue with an English-only policy for parents in a bilingual school. In order to change the culture of the school, Lora began by implementing an additive language education policy by changing the linguistic make-up of the front office staff. Lora petitioned the district administration to allow her to have a fully bilingual office staff so that when any parent walked into the school, their needs and concerns could be met through a language the parents were most comfortable using.

Lora moved the 's efforts to create *una comunidad de aprendizaje*, an emic term for a rich and meaningful bilingual learning community, within the dual language program at Hope Creek Elementary, nurtured equivalent linguistic and cultural spaces for students and families in an effort to afford students equitable educational access with the potential to fashion an empowered bilingual community (Genesse & Gándara, 1999). Lora's efforts to transform *la comunidad de aprendizaje* created a more productive space for affirmative cultural constructions of identities.

The strategies Lora used to transform the power relations within and across the school community transformed how Latinx families and students were subject within the educational

space. This transformative subjectivity within the language education policies of the school was complexly reflected within the classroom spaces of this dual language education program. The educator agency Lora employed as the teacher leader in her building was used to foster an intergroup appreciation, which according to Hamayan, Genesse, and Cloud (2013) is instrumental for societal shifts toward equality. The school culture and policies cultivated by Lora and her administrative team were socioculturally and sociopolitically situated to create a more inclusive neighborhood school.

### **Pedagogical Tensions and Subjective Consequences**

The *comunidad de aprendizaje* of Lora's vision moved Lora to reimagine the dual language program at Hope Creek. Lora renamed and restructured the 50/50 dual language program and instead created a *Spanish Immersion* program. The Spanish Immersion program was a 90/10 dual language model where Spanish was the primary language of instruction and language separation policies were encouraged and supported. These language separation policies created complex pedagogical tensions between the ways in which bilingual people, speaking to other bilinguals, organically engaged in bilingual ways of speaking, knowing, and being and the deficit views of bilingual people being two monolinguals in one.

The administrator, Lora, and the classroom teachers who taught in the dual language program at Hope Creek Elementary recognized these pedagogical tensions. The building administrator acknowledged the tension and pressure of teaching a non-dominant variety in English language contexts:

It's a challenge in our programs that English is ... more dominant, and has more status and sometimes it's 'oh, I have to speak Spanish now,' like 'oh, I have to do math now.' We are trying to make it something that is also fun and part of [their] world outside of

books; it's something that teachers have to work on all the time. (Personal communication, with Lora, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Lora acknowledged that there was a tension surrounding the language separation policies subjugating students differently but subjugating them all the same. The tension was rooted in conflicting language statuses and pressure in dual language contexts for teachers to make every effort throughout their instruction to equalize the language prestige of both English and the non-dominant variety, which in the context of this study was Spanish.

The pedagogical tensions around bilingual ways of speaking, thinking and interacting and languaging practices in dual language classrooms were repeated with additional dual language instructors throughout the building. Teachers were asked to reflect on their pedagogy and students' use of language within the classroom and program overall. The results showed that nearly 92 percent of dual language teachers who responded, felt that overall the Spanish Immersion Program at Hope Creek was successful, yet they reflected on concerns around language use and language separation throughout instruction. The teacher who felt that Hope Creek was only somewhat successful explained that the program was still developing oral language assessment tools to measure growth in both Spanish and English at the time of the study.

Another respondent reflected on the language and pedagogical tensions around language use. She expressed her concern about students having sufficient opportunities to speak Spanish amongst themselves in more casual contexts. The teacher noted the value of, "ensuring that students have more opportunities to speak Spanish amongst themselves [and] teachers being more accountable to this." The overwhelming majority of respondents expressed a struggle with the "quality and quantity" of Spanish during instructional time.

Exacerbating the pedagogical tensions felt by the teachers, the students in their interviews, with the exception of one student all noted that when socializing with their friends in school, they preferred to socialize in English. When probed about why this was, one student reflected, “mostly when like I am talking sometimes, some of the words we don’t like know in Spanish, so we try our best sometimes but if we don’t understand it, we tell it in English.” (Interview with Diego, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Yet, from the interviews, all of the heritage Spanish speaking students preferred to learn academic content in Spanish. The following segment, was an exit interview with Oscar talking about his own language use during both academic and social contexts. Oscar is a second generation heritage speaker of Spanish who has been in the Spanish Immersion program since Lora began.

- 1 Kristen Do you prefer to learn in English or Spanish?
- 2 Oscar Um
- 3 Kristen Or maybe both.
- 4 Oscar Writing in English for me is a little harder but in Spanish it’s like when
- 5 you read it and you spell it makes more sense.
- 6 Kristen Yes, it sure does, because it’s spelled just the way it sounds in Spanish
- 7 right? Different than in English. When your teacher is teaching you do
- 8 you prefer him or her to teach in English or Spanish?
- 9 Oscar Spanish.
- 10 Kristen Tell me about that... why?
- 11 Oscar Because when she writes, no when she tells us something to write, in
- 12 English, sometimes I make mistakes, because I am not that good at
- 13 writing in English but I am better at writing in Spanish.

- 14 Kristen It comes down to the writing really, which language you prefer.
- 15 Oscar Yeah.
- 16 Kristen When you socialize with your friends, when you talk to them at lunch and  
17 at recess, do you prefer to talk in English or Spanish?
- 18 Oscar English.
- 19 Kristen Ok, tell me more.
- 20 Oscar Um because um... we, we, like talking to our friends more in English.
- 21 Kristen Who would you say are your really good friends?
- 22 Oscar Sergio, Diego, and José
- 23 Kristen Ok, and all three of them speak Spanish at home too, right?
- 24 Oscar Yeah.
- 25 Kristen But you all choose to speak in English when you go to lunch.
- 26 Oscar Yeah.
- 27 Kristen Yeah. Is it easier because everyone else is speaking in English?
- 28 Oscar Easier to talk in Span- in English, but in Spanish it's harder because I talk  
29 a lot in English in school, but when I am talking to my dad I forget what  
30 to say in Spanish, so I say it in English, and he tells me to say it in  
31 Spanish. When I was little, I used to only talk in Spanish.

#### Segment 4.3 Exit interview with Oscar

Oscar, a heritage Spanish speaker, eight years old at the time of the study, articulated the nuanced tension both the teachers and administrators in the dual language program felt around the complexities of teaching and learning in a dual language program within English dominant contexts. The pedagogical tensions around which language to use, when, and for what purposes

often times has unintended consequences for heritage speakers of the non-dominant variety. At Hope Creek, half of the classes at each grade level are English-only and the other half are Spanish Immersion. Thus, no matter how much Spanish occurred in the classroom, English was all around Oscar. English was dominant in his social spaces at school, which meant the context to practice using more causal registers of Spanish to socialize with his peers was complex and rare. Although three of Oscar's closest friends and classmates spoke Spanish in their homes with one or both parents on a daily basis, they did not share peer to peer interactions exploring, creating and practicing more social uses of Spanish in a casual register. The analysis above is one possible explanation for the steady use of English, even during Spanish designated time when students were released to work independently. Students moved to more casual registers with their peers at their tables unless they were being policed and thus, the consistent tensions around languaging practices in general within the dual language classroom.

The need for students to engage in Spanish more regularly and consistently was echoed in the teacher survey. From the survey, one teacher wrote there was a, "need for teachers to value the quality and quantity of Spanish needed in order for non-native speakers to be truly biliterate." The exclusive focus on creating biliterate students, through teaching and using Spanish more exclusively with a focus on biliteracy for non-native speakers was misplaced as we saw in the previous example with Oscar, a heritage Spanish speaker that struggled to find the words he was looking for in Spanish sometimes too. The teacher's comment reflected the ideological positionality of the dual language program prior to Lora's arrival at Hope Creek when the program was focused on the bilingual and biliterate development of primarily heritage speakers of English. Another dual language teacher noted that she was, "concerned that some classes [didn't] require students to speak Spanish during Spanish time...and that some teachers seem to

“speak a lot of English with their class or switch back and forth a lot.” Given the emphasis articulated by Lora that the overarching goal of the immersion program was to afford equitable access to both content and language for students learning English as an additional language, the juxtaposition of these two ideals offered a clear picture of the tensions surrounding pedagogy and instructional practices within the dual language program at Hope Creek Elementary. The school-wide language separation policy within the dual language program was a seemingly impossible task to execute. In this regard, Hope Creek is not alone; language separation is a common practice in dual language programs as a tool to elevate and protect the instructional time of the non-dominant language variety (García, 2009) but is a complex ideal rarely achieved with fidelity owing to the natural language practices of bilinguals engaging both biculturally and bilingually.

The essential findings from this study include the following: (1) in spite of the ostensible support for dual language instruction from state and district policies, deficit perspectives persisted in relation to emergent bilinguals and the educational programs that served this student population; and (2) the building administrator fostered an affirmative bilingual and bicultural learning community for the teachers, the students, and their families at Hope Creek Elementary where kindness and linguistic as well as cultural diversity were valued through an additive perspective.

### **Implications**

The sociolinguistic and ethnographic framework applied throughout this study is rooted in the theoretical positioning prioritizing the understanding of insider ways of thinking around local phenomena. The multiple levels of macro language education policies and micro enactments coalesced to impact the ways in which participants made sense of dual language

education both at institutional and classroom contexts. The intersection of macro language education policies and micro enactments at Hope Creek Elementary School created spaces for participants in this study to deconstruct the notion of normative language forms, or monolingual, dominant variety forms and instead offered a more affirmative understanding of bilinguals' language resources as students engaged their full linguistic repertoires encompassing interdependent language forms and features (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Esquinca, 2014; García, 2009a; Hornberger & Link, 2014; Sayer, 2012). The language education policies and the overarching impact of societal bilingualism had a profound bearing on the teaching and learning in schools. In this study, although there is a movement towards support for dual language instruction in the language education policies, there is also a conflicting narrative of deficit orientations surrounding linguistically and culturally diverse students and their families which become intertextually and interdiscursively connected to the teaching and learning in classrooms.

Language education policies serve as outlines or goals used to guide decisions in order to move systems in the desired direction of those in power. The implications from this study propose a consideration to revise the written policy equivocality, "whenever feasible". The policy language ambiguity allows an appearance of overt support for the equal educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students. However, the policy language communicates that districts are not expected to adhere to the policy, hence the continued submersion of students in English-only contexts even though Washington is a bilingual friendly state. In the less than 11 percent of cases where students were offered any form of bilingual education in the State of Washington, it was owing to administrator will, deciding it was feasible and prioritizing the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students and families. The policy language surrounding the education of emergent bilingual students in Washington state does not demand

nor economically support what we know from educational research to be true, which leaves bilingual education programmatic offerings open for interpretation, economic availability or resources, and a desire to prioritize this student group.

The community and cultural in this study was fostered through bilingual friendly policies and the agentive power of the building administrator as well as the teacher and students in order to create *una comunidad de aprendizaje*. Freire and Macedo (2001) argue that any program attempting to emancipate historically marginalized students must bridge students home language practices, their own variety used in their daily interactions, with the language practices of school. Teachers and students have to work together to re-write and re-create their individual histories, cultures, and language varieties in order to subvert the asymmetrical power relations found in monoglossic practices. The translanguaging practices found in the classroom in this study reflected an ideological orientation that valued linguistic and cultural diversity and viewed the linguistic and cultural resources students and parents brought to the school as resources to be developed and shared. The subversion of dominant, English-only, norms that positioned students through a deficit lens, afforded linguistically and culturally diverse students who have historically been marginalized a more equalized access to social, cultural, and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) empowering both students and families to negate the dominant ideologies that encircled the English dominant contexts for linguistically diverse people.

### **Discussion**

As we think about the ways in which we confront and challenge the struggle for public education we must work to bridge communities together, we must acknowledge the deficit framing of our language education policies, and we must work to understand the profound ways in which the nature of deficit frames are played out in the context of the social and cultural

construction of identity for linguistically and culturally diverse students. Evidence from this study challenges us to reframe and normalize bilingual ways of knowing in dual language contexts from a social justice and educational equity position. To bring about justice and human dignity we cannot continue to keep bilingual students, teachers, and families framed through deficit lenses. More to be developed here as we engage at the conference☺.

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\*This list is still being developed and refined.

## Appendix A

Teacher Sample:

In a discussion around how language policies impact her dual language bilingual 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade classroom, the classroom teacher noted:

Here I was learning to be an agent for social change, yet I am dealing with this systematic oppression of a dominant culture...you know there are always boundaries... You know that struggle becomes so real to the kids as well. They know that they have to fear immigration; they know they have to fear when they are out and about they know they have to fear discriminatory, they know they have to fear racism and all those aspects of being a child of color.

DRAFT

**Appendix B**

## Student Sample:

As students were tasked to negotiate and renegotiate the cultural and social constructions of their bilingual and bicultural identities through the lens of these contradictory and often repressive policies, they were often feeling stuck and unsure. One student noted in his interview: It's easier to talk in Span- in English, but in Spanish it's harder because I talk a lot in English in school, but when I am talking to my dad I forget what to say in Spanish so I say it in English and he tells me to say it in Spanish. When I was little, I used to only talk in Spanish.

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